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# THESIS

**BRIDGING THE GAP: HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF CONVENTIONAL AND UNCONVENTIONAL FORCES INTEGRATION**

by

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Throughout American history, there has been a tension between conventional and unconventional forces on the field as well as between the commanders; we even see this at the strategic level. Force misperceptions created a gap between U.S. conventional and unconventional forces that reached a peak at the conclusion of the Vietnam War. This gap has slowly been reduced with the creation and efforts of SOCOM; however, inefficiencies in the conduct of major combat campaigns still remain as a result of poor integration.

The Burma Campaign and the Liberation of the Philippines 1942-1945 provide two unique case studies in which unconventional forces worked under the overall guidance and command of a conventional leader. Throughout the Burma Campaign and the struggle for the Liberation of the Philippines, conventional forces relied heavily on the ability of unconventional forces to support and contribute to the overall campaign strategy. Direct and indirect communication, coordination, and autonomy of operations between these forces resulted in strategic successes enroute to victory in World War II. The coordination and roles of these forces throughout the campaigns provide valuable insights and lessons learned that can be applied to today's forces, who find themselves working together - and needing to work together - in conflicts abroad.


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# BRIDGING THE GAP: HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF CONVENTIONAL AND UNCONVENTIONAL FORCES INTEGRATION

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# ABSTRACT

Throughout American history, there has been a tension between conventional and unconventional forces on the field as well as between the commanders; we even see this at the strategic level. Force misperceptions created a gap between U.S. conventional and unconventional forces that reached a peak at the conclusion of the Vietnam War. This gap has slowly been reduced with the creation and efforts of SOCOM; however, inefficiencies in the conduct of major combat campaigns still remain as a result of poor integration.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS


I. INTRODUCTION....1
A. BACKGROUND....1
B. PURPOSE....4
C. METHODOLOGY....5
D. DEFINITION OF TERMS....6
1. Special Operations....6
2. Unconventional Warfare....7
E. CONCLUSION....8

II. STRUGGLE FOR LIBERATION: PHILIPPINES 1942-1945....11
A. BACKGROUND....11
B. OVERCOMING DISPARITIES....12
1. Cultural Differences....12
2. Organizational Differences....14
C. SUPPORTING ROLES....16
1. Eyes and Ears on the Ground....16
2. Supplying the Effort....17
3. Force Multiplier....18
D. PHILIPPINE ANALYSIS....20
1. Absence of Alternatives....20
2. Environmental Conditions....21
3. Division of Labor....22

III. OSS INTEGRATION: BURMA 1942-1945....25
A. BACKGROUND....25
B. OSS'S INCEPTION INTO THE BURMA CAMPAIGN....27
1. Personalities....27
2. Organizational and Cultural Differences....30
3. Coordination....31
C. SUPPORTING ROLES....33
1. Force Multiplier....33
2. Disutility of SOF....35
D. BURMA ANALYSIS....37
1. Absence of Alternatives....37
2. Environmental Conditions....38
3. Division of Labor....39

IV. WARS OF TODAY: AFGHANISTAN AND IRAQ....41
A. BACKGROUND....41
B. AFGHANISTAN....43
1. Environmental Conditions....43
2. Unity of Effort....45
C. IRAQ....47

1. Coordination....47
2. Force Capabilities/Technology....48
V. CONCLUSION....51
A. SUMMARY....51
B. RECOMMENDATIONS....52
C. FUTURE RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS....54
WORKS CITED....57
INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST....61

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# I. INTRODUCTION

## A. BACKGROUND

Throughout American history, there has been a tension between conventional and unconventional forces on the field as well as between the commanders; we even see this at the strategic level. The United States (U.S.) Armed Forces were designed, structured, and equipped for maneuver warfare similar to the militaries of all modern major powers.[1] World War II's mechanized battles between professional soldiers of various nations instilled a conventional mindset or, if you will, a certain attitude regarding how military combat should be conducted. Even as U.S. combat forces in World War II and in later U.S. conflicts abroad utilized small "unconventional" forces to disrupt, demoralize, and gather intelligence against the enemy in certain instances, the focus of the U.S. military remained conventional in nature as these "elite" units were continually reduced in size at the conclusion of such conflicts.

Professionalized Special Operations Forces' (SOF) roots were established through various successes of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in World War II. Interest in organizing units to support foreign resistance movements to the advantage of the U.S. began to take shape. However, the military services backed away from any direct involvement with such units due to their reluctance to outwardly associate with the "dirty tricks" business.[2] As SOF forces eventually grew to be a permanent part of the U.S. military forces, military leaders continued to distance themselves from "untraditional" forms of warfare, especially in the implementation of unconventional warfare in operational and strategic planning. The Army's view of low-intensity conflict, particularly what it regarded as counterinsurgency warfare's trivial roles in the two world wars and the Korean War, formed the foundation for its approach to Vietnam.[3]

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[1] Thomas K. Adams, *US Special Operations Forces in Action: The Challenge of Unconventional Warfare* (Portland: Frank Cass, 1998), 1.

[2] Alfred H. Paddock, *U.S. Army Special Warfare: Its Origins* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002), 68-69.

[3] Andrew Krepinevich, *The Army and Vietnam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1986), 4-5. Krepinevich terms this philosophy as the *Army Concept* of war in which two characteristics exist: "…a focus on mid-intensity, or conventional, war and a reliance on high volumes of firepower to minimize casualties…"

Countless accounts of the Vietnam War have been written offering different reasons for why the U.S. was defeated in that conflict. Disagreements regarding Vietnam will not be revisited in this thesis. However, what conclusively did come out of Vietnam was a heightened rift or conflict between conventional and unconventional leaders. Leaders in the mainstream military felt SOF acted unilaterally and unprofessionally. The post-Vietnam backlash saw the near eradication of SOF organizations.[4] The most dominant lesson learned from Vietnam was the attitude "never again." Military leaders, like General Colin Powell, called upon their experiences in Vietnam to reexamine the use of U.S. military force in conflicts abroad.

Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait provided the U.S. military the opportunity to display the mainstream military's lessons learned from Vietnam. In the early stages of the 1991 Persian Gulf War, General Norman Schwarzkopf, commander in chief of U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM), maintained a tight control on SOF operations in support of DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM. In the build up to the war, a high degree of animosity existed between USCENTCOM and U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM). USCENTCOM distrusted SOF and regarded them as out-of-control cowboys; similarly, USSOCOM felt that USCENTCOM was a "do nothing" command.[5] This created an apprehensive relationship between Schwarzkopf and the commander in chief of USSOCOM, General Carl Stiner.

It would thus be an understatement to suggest that the first integration of conventional and unconventional forces in a unified campaign plan since Vietnam began on shaky ground. Schwarzkopf maintained a short leash on SOF throughout the war, yet his indifference toward SOF did dissipate and by the end of hostilities he admitted that SOF displayed professionalism and had achieved clear successes that contributed significantly to the overall victory.[6] SOF successfully accomplished direct action, reconnaissance, deception, and psychological operations missions, and additionally proved instrumental in the training of coalition forces and the rebuilding of Kuwait.

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[4] Susan L. Marquis, *Unconventional Warfare: Rebuilding U.S. Special Operations Forces* (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 1997), 34-35.

[5] Ibid., 230-231.

[6] Ibid., 231.

The 1991 Gulf War was a unique situation in which the environment produced limited, clear objectives that could be attained by using conventional and unconventional forces. Much different than wars in the past, the coalition objective was to remove Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi Armed Forces from Kuwaiti sovereign territory. This desired end state was far less ambiguous than in wars of the past and those we currently face, in which regional stability through democracy is the intended end state. The 1991 Gulf War likewise showcased American firepower and thus was the perfect battle for conventional forces. Though SOF garnered significant respect and demonstrated exceptional capabilities a decade after the DESERT ONE failure, the unique circumstances of the Iraq War saw little call for unconventional warfare, instead highlighting SOF's direct action or attritional capabilities.

After the 1991 Persian Gulf War, then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Colin Powell outlined his strategy for the use of U.S. military force. The key elements of his doctrine were that the military was to be used as a last resort, and only when and if there were clear objectives, strong public support, overwhelming and disproportionate force in comparison to the enemy, and a clearly defined exit strategy. His doctrine emerged from his experiences as a major in the Vietnam War and accorded well with the sentiments of the Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger.[7] Though this doctrine pointed to the foundations for success in the 1991 Gulf War, it also affirmed the military's emphasis on attrition warfare – a type of warfare that is counterintuitive to the conduct of counterinsurgency and unconventional warfare.

Meanwhile, as we've since learned, U.S. success in the Gulf War taught the enemies of today how *not* to fight the American military.[8] Engagements against conventional enemies with regular armies were absent for the next decade; in place came U.S. intervention in internal conflicts in countries with repressive or nonexistent governments, in which humanitarian assistance and a return of internal stability became the objectives. SOF contributed significantly in conflicts like Somalia, Haiti, and

[7] Doug DuBrin, "Military Strategy: Powell Doctrine – Background, Application and Critical Analysis."*PBS News Hour*; available from http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/teachers/lessonplans/iraq/powelldoctrine_short.html; Internet; accessed 2 February 2006.

[8] Carnes Lord, "The Role of the United States in Small Wars," *ANNALS of the AAPSS*, September, 1995, 96.

Kosovo; however, their roles were becoming more conventionalized in nature. The most notable example being Somalia in which "mission creep" led to a humanitarian assistance operation morphing into a man-hunting operation in search of the single decisive action that would lead to conflict termination.

Despite the unique unconventional warfare capability that SOF provided during OPERATION PROVIDE COMFORT in Northern Iraq, the Haiti intervention from 1994-1996, and various other low-profile assistance missions in places like Rwanda and the Republic of Georgia, such contributions counted for little given a technological superior attritional warfare mindset. This mindset took hold not only within the conventional community, but in the unconventional community as well. Unconventional warfare doctrine did not markedly advance within SOCOM during the 1990's, remaining relatively focused on the conventional, or hyper-conventional, missions that SOF could provide.[9] This undoubtedly led to an atrophy of unconventional warfare skills within the SOF community.

Today, and arguably in the future, U.S. Forces are faced with far more challenging objectives than those of the Persian Gulf War. Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq necessitate the need to apply the appropriate mixture of forces and capabilities in order to establish democratic societies in two traditionally non-democratic countries. These wars will be won through the people of these nations. In order to accomplish these missions, conventional and unconventional forces must more *efficiently* integrate to better *effectively* utilize all capabilities that each force provides. This requires commanders in both realms to fully appreciate their strengths and weaknesses, as well as those of all other U.S. forces, never mind just those of the enemy.

## B. PURPOSE

The purpose of this thesis is to examine successful warfare campaigns involving significant conventional and unconventional forces integration, then determine the applicability of these lessons learned to today. The anticipated possible benefits include: increased efficiency and effectiveness in campaign combat operations; a more

[9] Adams, 287.

complementary division of labor; inter-dependence versus turf competition; recognition of the need for better cross-cultural and operational understanding; enhanced capabilities awareness at the C2 level; increased integrated training opportunities between conventional and unconventional forces prior to armed conflicts; and enhanced coordinated "means" to achieve a common "end". The expected general audience includes conventional and unconventional commanders, as well as policy makers.

## C. METHODOLOGY

To write this thesis has required conducting an in depth examination of literature devoted to two particular case studies involving the integration of conventional and unconventional forces during the World War II Asian campaigns. This historic period offers us the ability to analyze how these differentiated forces' relationships developed within a social context void of the technological instruments and expansive organizational structure so prevalent in today's military. Relationships were more personal, enabling trust to be built that facilitated autonomy of operations within an overarching unity of effort philosophy. Arguably more so than today, these relationships were created within an atmosphere of animosity that created friction between the two disciplines of warfare while engaged in an environment that required an appropriate mix of forces to efficiently and effectively defeat a formidable foe. Though Afghanistan has gained the SOF community accolades, these achievements have most likely still not affected the U.S. military's reluctance to accept a type of warfare other than the conventional model.[10] Herein lies the relevancy in comparing and contrasting case studies 60 years apart.

The Burma Campaign and the Liberation of the Philippines 1942-1945 provide two unique case studies in which unconventional forces worked under the overall guidance and command of a conventional leader. Throughout the Burma Campaign and the struggle for the Liberation of the Philippines, conventional forces relied heavily on the ability of unconventional forces to support and contribute to the overall campaign

[10] Adams, 289.

strategy. Direct and indirect communication, coordination, and autonomy of operations between these forces resulted in strategic successes enroute to victory in World War II. The coordination and roles of these forces throughout the campaigns provide valuable insights and lessons that can be applied to today's forces, who must continuously learn to re-integrate as we engage in conflicts abroad.

## D. DEFINITION OF TERMS

This thesis utilizes several terms in an interchangeable fashion for the sake of simplicity and literary style. It is noted that various definitions have been offered over the years for many of the terms I use. Joint Publication (JP) 3-05, Doctrine for Joint Special Operations offers a detailed glossary of the many terms used in this thesis. Listed below are the two most prominent: special operations and unconventional warfare.

### 1. Special Operations

> Operations conducted in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments to achieve military, diplomatic, informational, and/or economic objectives employing military capabilities for which there is no broad conventional force requirement. These operations often require covert, clandestine, or low visibility capabilities. Special operations [SO] are applicable across the range of military operations. They can be conducted independently or in conjunction with operations of conventional forces or other government agencies and may include operations through, with, or by indigenous or surrogate forces. Special operations differ from conventional operations in degree of physical and political risk, operational techniques, mode of employment, independence from friendly support, and dependence on detailed operational intelligence and indigenous assets.[11]

This definition identifies the current military capabilities of modern "special operations" that have become prevalent within the military arena in the last 50 plus years. In order to capture the critical effects employed by American guerrilla leaders in the Philippines and Detachment 101's operations in Burma, it is essential to correlate their

[11] Joint Publication 3-05, *Doctrine for Joint Special Operations*; available from http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/new_pubs/jp3_05print.pdf; Internet; accessed on 07 February 2006.

efforts in unison with the SO definition of today. With this in mind, in an attempt to bridge the achievements of the past with the present, this thesis adds to JP 3-05's definition, John Arquilla's definition of SO, "…military (or paramilitary) actions that fall outside the realm of conventional warfare during their *respective time periods* [emphasis added]."[12]

### 2. Unconventional Warfare

> These are operations that involve a broad spectrum of military and paramilitary operations, normally of long duration, predominantly conducted through, with, or by indigenous or surrogate forces who are organized, trained, equipped, supported, and directed in varying degrees by an external source. UW is unique in that it is a SO that can either be conducted as part of a geographic combatant commander's overall theater campaign, or as an independent, subordinate campaign. When conducted independently, the primary focus of UW is on political-military objectives and psychological objectives. UW includes military and paramilitary aspects of resistance movements. UW military activity represents the culmination of a successful effort to organize and mobilize the civil populace against a hostile government or occupying power. From the US perspective, the intent is to develop and sustain these supported resistance organizations and to synchronize their activities to further US national security objectives. SOF units do not create resistance movements. They advise, train, and assist indigenous resistance movements already in existence to conduct UW and when required, accompany them into combat. When UW operations support conventional military operations, the focus shifts to primarily military objectives; however the political and psychological implications remain. Operational and strategic staffs and commanders must guard against limiting UW to a specific set of circumstances or activities defined by either recent events or personal experience. The most prevalent mistake is the belief that UW is limited to guerrilla warfare or insurgency.[13]

This thesis utilizes the terms unconventional warfare, guerrilla warfare, and irregular warfare interchangeably. Defining what constitutes unconventional warfare could encompass an entire chapter. For our purposes, guerrilla and irregular warfare are military capabilities interrelated within an unconventional warfare plan. UW itself delves into the political as well as military aspects of the objectives. In the thesis I use the terms

[12] John Arquilla, ed., *From Troy to Entebbe: Special Operations in Ancient and Modern Times* (New York: University Press of America, Inc., 1996), xv-xvi.

[13] Joint Publication 3-05.

not only to discuss the operations, but also the forces that are engaged in such operations. For instance, irregular forces in the Philippines and Burma were predominantly indigenous soldiers under the control and guidance of a small number of American soldiers. In this capacity, they utilized *unconventional* or unorthodox methods, in comparison to the *conventional* or traditional methods employed by "professional" soldiers of that time. The integration of these capabilities and the subsequent effect of acting as a force multiplier laid the foundations for an alternative indirect approach to warfare that is today called unconventional warfare.

## E. CONCLUSION

Current wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have illuminated the weaknesses that exist in the U.S. military's ability to conduct efficient and effective combat operations outside of high-intensity warfare. This thesis does not propose that the U.S. is failing or will fail in conducting these campaigns; such assessments require years of observation before they can be truly measured. However, failure to recognize and correct deficiencies can leave the U.S. military debilitated or inadequately prepared for waging war against more lethal enemies in the future.

Efficient and effective conduct of high-intensity and mid-intensity warfare requires a disproportionate mix of forces and strategies. Recognizing and utilizing the appropriate mix of forces for a particular environment is essential to achieving success. Against an unconventional enemy where battles are won by gaining the population's confidence through adequate security and social interactions, the majority of operations must fall within the realm and strengths of SOF in order that SOF complements and enhances the strengths of the conventional component. With conventional commanders continuing to remain in leadership positions, strides must be taken to reexamine and broaden their understanding of SOF capabilities. It is imperative that we break down the barriers between organizational cultures that inherently inhibit units from effectively communicating and comprehending their respective capabilities.

History has proven that success was often achieved when these forces were used synergistically. Thomas M. Huber acknowledges this merging of capabilities in his

"compound warfare" framework, as he states, "…complementary interactions between regular and irregular forces make compound warfare an especially effective form of warfare, one in which the whole is greater than the sum of the parts."[14] Better integration of conventional and unconventional forces is not just essential in the mid-intensity warfare currently confronting the U.S. military, but offers a force more suitably prepared and difficult to beat in any kind of warfare.

[14] Thomas M. Huber, ed., *Compound Warfare: That Fatal Knot* (Fort Leavenworth: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Press, 2002), 2.

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# II. STRUGGLE FOR LIBERATION: PHILIPPINES 1942-1945

## A. BACKGROUND

On December 8, 1941, only hours after the attack at Pearl Harbor, the Japanese unleashed yet another surprise attack as Japanese aircraft began bombarding military installations on the Philippine island of Luzon. The American forces in place at the time fell under the control of General Douglas MacArthur, commander of U.S. Army Forces Far East, who was headquartered in Manila. MacArthur was initially sent to the Philippines in 1935 by President Roosevelt to implement a ten-year defense plan for the islands; however, growing American isolationist sentiment and a Philippine desire for independence led to the islands being miserably under-defended and their strategic location misunderstood by all except the Japanese.[15] The Japanese invasion went virtually unimpeded as the American and Filipino forces had only enough effective troops to establish defensive positions, and were unable to launch any substantive counter-offensive. Over the next several months, MacArthur's headquarters fell back to the Bataan Peninsula and then to the island of Corregidor, from where he eventually was ordered to evacuate to Australia by President Roosevelt. The fall of Bataan and Corregidor in the spring of 1942 sealed the fate of thousands of Allied soldiers and Filipino citizens alike, as many suffered horrendously from various incidents and atrocities, which included: the murderous Death March; starvation and disease at various prisoner of war camps (most notably O'Donnell and Cabanatuan); death in the South China Sea from American planes and submarines as they attacked unmarked Japanese prison ships; and Japanese atrocities committed against anyone thought to aid the Americans or Allied nations.[16]

Many of those who survived the Japanese push across the island of Luzon began to either join newly established guerrilla units or organize units of their own within the

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[15] Edwin Price Ramsey and Stephen J. Rivele, *Lieutenant Ramsey's War: From Horse Soldier to Guerrilla Commander* (Washington: Potomac Books, Inc., 1990), 34.

[16] Bernard Norling, *The Intrepid Guerrillas of North Luzon* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1999), 81.

vast plains, mountains, and jungles of Luzon. These loosely organized units eventually formed into the Luzon Guerrilla Army Force (LGAF), with two to three American soldiers per unit while the remaining members were of Philippine descent. Unorganized, lacking experience, and void of direct supervision from any decisive authority, these units developed to become instrumental to the allied effort. Over the course of the three years when Luzon was under Japanese control, these units waged unconventional warfare against the Japanese, provided invaluable intelligence to American forces, and eventually reintegrated with U.S. conventional forces after the invasion at Lingayen Gulf and the subsequent retaking of the Philippines from the Japanese aggressor.

This chapter examines the relationship that slowly developed between the LGAF units and MacArthur's conventional Southwest Pacific Area (SWPA) command, based in Australia. Worth noting is how the cultural and organizational differences between these forces *did not* hinder accomplishing their objectives. It thus seems worth asking how the forces supported one another throughout the campaign, to include coordination, dissemination of information, and joint planning; and how the conditions in the Philippines enhanced the ability of these forces to build mutual trust and eventually integrate. In short, this chapter analyzes how all of these contributing factors enabled an efficient and effective division of labor between two vastly different forces.

## B. OVERCOMING DISPARITIES

### 1. Cultural Differences

All the Americans on Luzon were conventionally trained and conventionally oriented; however, over time, the necessity and progression of conducting irregular warfare led to development of a soldier whose analytical and operational capacity became quite different from that developed within a conventional environment.[17] Prior to World War II, guerrilla operations received scant recognition within the American military strategic culture. The conventional professional soldier often was guided in the belief

[17] When stating that little difference existed initially, I am referring to the American soldiers who led and joined the guerrilla units. These were soldiers who were conventional troops one day and, due to circumstances, found themselves in an unconventional environment that required rapid adaptation virtually overnight.

that, "True warriors would like nothing better than to take part in a clash of armies on empty plains or fleets on the high seas or airplanes in the blue skies, all spheres where martial skill can be displayed in its "pure" form…"[18] Such notions were a far cry from what was required of Luzon guerrillas given that their "sphere" was embedded deep in the jungle or high in the mountains, where avoidance of the enemy was paramount to survival.

Many of the American guerrilla leaders felt a great deal of animosity towards MacArthur. Many believed MacArthur had abandoned the Philippines and his American soldiers when he left the islands for Australia.[19] These strong emotions regarding his indifference were handled quite differently by the various American survivors of the Japanese invasion. Some slipped into deep depression and refused to wage war against the Japanese while others fought off bouts of depression and focused their anger on the Japanese, giving free rein to a selfish, individual desire for pure survival. The latter soldiers tended to believe that MacArthur and American forces would return to liberate the islands. Over time they began to greatly respect and admire MacArthur for his insistence on doing all he could to assist the irregular effort. Whether they were in guerrilla camps, working in the fields, or living in the city, many Filipinos likewise admired MacArthur. Indeed, MacArthur was an icon to them, and it was only a question of "when" not "if" he would return.

The people and the environment of the Philippines represented a culture much different from the American military culture. The extreme measures that guerrilla warfare demands of individuals, operating independently in an environment often underappreciated by larger conventional forces, existed in the Philippines under Japanese occupation.

> Professional soldiers have traditionally scorned guerrillas as rude, untrained, undisciplined, and unreliable; likely to be poachers, smugglers, convicts, or bandits more interested in plunder than victory; frequently more terrorists than soldiers; corrupted by personal and political

[18] Max Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 282.

[19] Robert Lapham and Bernard Norling, *Lapham's Raiders: Guerrillas in the Philippines 1942-1945* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 28-29.

> ambitions—in short, mere murderous outlaws rather than gentlemen who wage war in at least a semichivalrous fashion.[20]

MacArthur was as conventional a soldier as one could find during his era. However, he possessed a rare understanding, affection, and respect for the Philippine people that grew out of his family's history in the islands.[21] This cultural understanding of the locals enabled MacArthur to appreciate and fully support the roles that LGAF units undertook during the three years of his absence. MacArthur never questioned Filipinos' loyalty and the same was true for the Filipinos as well: "there is no doubt that the character, personality, and deeds of Douglas MacArthur had contributed significantly to the pro-Americanism of most Filipinos, since they idolized the famous general."[22]

To understand how best to efficiently and effectively use an unconventional force first requires an understanding of the localities and populace within the area of operations. Nobody understood the localities and populace better than MacArthur. He appreciated not only the tactical utility that the guerrillas could provide Allied Forces, but also the LGAF's ability to sustain and increase the morale of an occupied people who would provide invaluable assistance as the Allied Forces invaded and began the retaking of the Philippines in 1944.

### 2. Organizational Differences

The overall structure of the LGAF units was extremely *ad hoc*. Units arose separately and often remained independent.[23] Despite a loose structure that often created confusion when disseminating information between irregular and regular units, many units were nonetheless able to coexist over a long period of time while continuously

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[20] Lapham and Norling, 76.

[21] Douglas MacArthur's father, Lieutenant General Arthur MacArthur, took part in the capture of Manila during the Spanish-American War and served a short stint as Military Governor of the Philippines following the war.

[22] Ray C. Hunt and Bernard Norling, *Behind Japanese Lines: An American Guerrilla in the Philippines* (Lexington: The University Press of New York, 1986), 135.

[23] Adams, 30. However, Hunt and Norling (p. 76) state that MacArthur and his staff had made tentative plans for guerrilla operations prior to the war; though, it seems to have been at the American-Filipino nationalist level and never at the US Army mid-officer level. The few people, if any, that knew of MacArthur's plans did not participate in organizing the guerrillas' operations. Those who took on the task of organizing did so without prior training or understanding of guerrilla operations.

staying focused on the mutual end state of eventual liberation. To explain the success of these forces requires a slightly more detailed examination of the contributing factors of environment, autonomy, and professionalism.

Of the American personnel who survived the Japanese invasion and began forming these guerrilla units, none possessed previous experience or instruction in organizing, training, or leading irregular forces.[24] This lack of organizational knowledge initially left interaction among the individual guerrilla units in disarray as many attempted to organize all units under one command, similar to the only organization they knew: the U.S. Army. However, Robert Lapham, for one, argued that a loose organization was the only kind that could efficiently work within the environment that then existed. Every leader in every area had problems that were unique to his situation. A central authority issuing orders and unsolicited advice would not improve the situation.[25] The resultant structure thus varied drastically from that of the traditional army. Also, because the irregular units had a clearer picture of the Philippine situation it was necessary that authority and autonomous conduct of operations remained "pushed down" to the lower levels of the irregular units in the field.

Once sustained communications were established in 1944, SWPA allowed the individual units to flood it with intelligence reports so that situational awareness could be developed at higher echelons. SWPA had the manning to digest the many reports that came pouring in from individual units and, once situational awareness was developed, SWPA began to seek specific intelligence by addressing its taskings to "all guerrilla leaders."

Together, irregular units and SWPA informally formed a divisionalized organizational structure. This type of organization incorporates individual units that develop their own independent structures suited to their specific requirements. Autonomy remains pushed down to the individual units; however, some supervision or control must remain in order to ensure a unity of effort across the organization.[26] This

[24] Paddock, 30.

[25] Lapham and Norling, 113-114.

[26] James Brian Quinn and Henry Mintzberg and Robert M. James, *The Strategy Process: Concepts, Contexts, and Cases* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1988), 301.

type of organization enabled SWPA to standardize the intelligence it was collecting from irregular units, while ensuring that the units continued to conduct business autonomously for the overall strategic objective.

## C. SUPPORTING ROLES

### 1. Eyes and Ears on the Ground

From the fall of Bataan and Corregidor to the invasion at Lingayen Gulf, the irregular forces in Luzon were the only means that SWPA and the political leaders in Washington possessed for being able to accurately assess the situation on the ground. The LGAF's primary mission area from the start was one of intelligence gathering, which consisted primarily of enemy troop concentrations and movements, beach defenses, air base sites, propaganda, and changes in Japanese habits or morale.[27] MacArthur encouraged the irregular units to hone their intelligence gathering skills early on with the understanding that this would prove useful at a later date. Though raids on the Japanese could prove valuable as a morale booster for the irregulars and Filipino civilians, the disadvantages outweighed the advantages. Such attacks would have few discernible effects over the course of the war without reinforcements by regular forces and more often than not would lead to heavy irregular losses and Japanese reprisals against civilians.[28]

Ultimately, the initial guerrilla effort in Luzon can be summarized as playing an indirect role with long term implications, both operationally and strategically. Operationally, low-key intelligence gathering would enhance planning and execution of MacArthur's southern island-hopping campaign and prove crucial once the invasion of the Philippines began. Additionally, Filipino civilian assistance would be essential to ensuring an efficient and effective sweep across the Philippine islands following the invasion. If the irregulars had taken a stronger direct action role against the Japanese, Japanese reprisals might well have damaged the Americans' ability to garner the civilian

[27] Lapham and Norling, 92.

[28] Hunt and Norling, 62. Manuel Quezon was also adamant that the primary function be intelligence gathering. Lapham and Norling, 91-92.

support that proved so invaluable after the invasion. Strategically speaking, the less obtrusive engagement by the irregulars enabled Washington to remain focused on the European theater of operations. If the LGAF continuously succumbed to small-scale losing battles against the Japanese, public opinion and concern may have been distracted from the primary Allied objective of defeating Germany in Europe first.[29]

### 2. Supplying the Effort

The military damage sustained from the surprise attack at Pearl Harbor left the U.S. even more unprepared to respond effectively to other attacks elsewhere in the world, let alone in the Philippines, with the appropriate amount of support and force required. Once American forces surrendered in the Philippines and the decision was made to engage Europe and Hitler first, the Pacific theater was clearly a lower priority for supplies and support. Throughout the first half of the war, MacArthur could not supply the guerrilla movement due to a scarcity of resources, resources that were not even available for his own campaigns in New Guinea.[30] The American soldiers on the ground in Luzon would have to figure out what to do with little external support. During this phase of the war, MacArthur could offer moral encouragement but scant material aid, which was yet another impetus for focusing primarily on intelligence gathering rather than combatant roles.

In *Behind Japanese Lines: An American Guerrilla in the Philippines*, Ray Hunt describes the initial stages of the flow of supplies from SWPA and the effect these had on guerrilla operations.[31] In mid-1943, MacArthur appointed General Courtney Whitney to take charge of the Philippine Regional Section tasked with monitoring and supporting guerrilla operations. This began the start of a flow of supplies, delivered by submarines, to the Philippine islands that would continue up through the American invasion. The equipment included hundreds of man-pack radios; American propaganda items, to include packages of cigarettes, gum, candy bars, matches, and toothpaste, all imprinted with MacArthur's famous promise "I shall return"; guns; ammunition; and clothing.

[29] Lapham and Norling, 92-93.

[30] Hunt and Norling, 79.

[31] Ibid., 160-161.

More significantly, in order to ensure the efficient use of the provided supplies, Whitney had close to 500 men of Filipino descent trained in radio operation and maintenance, weather and plane observation, and sabotage smuggled into the Philippines to support and aid in the training and recruitment of guerrillas.

The incoming supplies from the SWPA afforded the guerrillas the ability to increase the size of their units across Luzon by obtaining and distributing the newly acquired weapons and training. This increase in supplies was the first signal that operational integration for the invasion was rapidly approaching. Additionally, American propaganda with MacArthur's promise to return was circulated and added to the legitimacy of the irregular forces in the eyes of the Philippine nationals. This endearing of the irregulars to the populace enabled an expansion of the intelligence network, along with enhanced protection and support. Possibly even more critical than the effect on the populace was the effect that MacArthur's promise of imminent return had on the ground level soldiers. The guerrilla leaders and their forces yearned for recognition from MacArthur, and now, not only was there incontrovertible evidence that MacArthur remembered his forces, but that he appreciated their activities, sacrifices, and the unity of effort in which he would soon join them.[32]

### 3. Force Multiplier

Meanwhile, the LGAF units formed up in the Philippines provided MacArthur with the "ammunition" he needed to convince the decision makers in Washington that it was in the best interests of the campaign to retake the Philippines and not bypass the islands. In the summer of 1944, MacArthur argued that it would be a political disaster to land at Formosa and not liberate the U.S.'s Filipino allies. To add credence to this argument and support for his plan, "[h]e also contended that hundreds of thousands of Filipinos would immediately extend every aid to an American invasion force and that guerrillas in the islands would augment U.S. combat strength, advantages that would not exist on Formosa."[33] In essence, the guerrilla units provided MacArthur with an advance force to the invasion and then a force multiplier after the invasion.

[32]Lapham and Norling, 156-157.

[33] Ibid., 172.

At the same time, the presence of the guerrilla units drastically shaped Japanese operational strategy concerning the defense of Luzon. The Japanese originally had planned on a heavy defensive position in the central plains north of Manila, intending to force a major battle against invading forces there. However, with guerrillas estimated to be in excess of 40,000, the majority of whom were in the rear of the Japanese lines, the Japanese were forced to alter their strategy and set up their position along the eastern and northern mountains of Luzon in an attempt to limit the ability of the guerrillas to disrupt their operations.[34]

The psychological impact that the LGAF forces had on the Imperial Army is difficult to measure. However, three years of intelligence gathering, observations, and harassment raids by the guerrillas could only suggest to the Japanese that these guerrillas knew the Imperial Army's weaknesses and were acutely aware of its vulnerabilities. This meant they had to plan for dealing with the guerrillas in addition to an invasion force — which amounted to worrying about multiple fronts.

MacArthur was able to use the irregulars to maximum capability because he not only understood his enemy (the Japanese), but he recognized what the guerrillas could provide to his invasion force. One day prior to the Lingayen Gulf invasion, MacArthur radioed to one of the LGAF unit leaders, "Starting immediately, destroy enemy wire communications, railroad tracks, rolling stock and trucks, planes concealed in dispersal areas, ammunition, oil and supply dumps…Unleash maximum possible violence against the enemy."[35] The low-key force that could not afford prolonged combat operations against the Japanese for the three years prior to the invasion now had the commander of SWPA's permission to fully engage the enemy.

Under the command of Lt. General Walter Krueger, the U.S. Sixth Army landed at Lingayen Gulf unopposed on January 9, 1945 and soon began its push across Luzon towards Manila. Prior to the landings, guerrilla units had reported the atrocities committed by the Japanese against allied prisoners at various POW camps across Luzon. One of these camps was located five miles outside of Cabanatuan City, which rested only

[34] Ramsey, 288-301.

[35] Ibid., 301.

25 miles from the forward edge of the battle lines by the end of January. Krueger feared that the swift American advance would lead the Japanese to massacre the 512 allied prisoners held at Cabanatuan in order to hasten their retreat; thus, he tasked his 6th Ranger Battalion to coordinate with local guerrilla units and conduct a raid to rescue all POWs in the camp.[36]

The raid itself could not have been launched were it not for the sustained presence and intelligence-gathering of the guerrillas over the past three years. Not only did they know all of the specifics about the camp lay-out, condition of the prisoners, and guard strength, but the vast intelligence network that had been created over the years provided continuous updates and offered protective shelter to the assault force. In this sense it wasn't just the irregulars themselves who were force multipliers, but also the villagers who they had relied on and collaborated with. Villagers supplied the raiding force with food and water as they crossed over 25 miles of terrain. The guerrilla units, meanwhile, also assisted the 6th Ranger Battalion by acting as a blocking force at two sensitive areas where enemy encampments existed. The blocking force essentially denied the Japanese the ability to respond to the liberation of the POW camp with a quick reaction force. Ultimately, the guerrilla involvement in the Cabanatuan raid enabled Americans who otherwise would have been unfamiliar with the environment and the populace to conduct a swift, efficient operation. It represented a perfect lash-up between unconventional and conventional capabilities.

## D. PHILIPPINE ANALYSIS

### 1. Absence of Alternatives

The use of guerrilla units in the Philippines and their subsequent integration into the U.S. 6th Army was not a preplanned, conscious choice, but derived from an absence of alternatives. These were soldiers left behind by an unprepared U.S. Army that lacked

[36] William H. McRaven, *Spec Ops Case Studies in Special Operations Warfare: Theory and Practice* (New York: Ballantine Press, 1996), 246. This book offers a detailed description of the entire operation for anyone interested in further details. In an effort to only narrowly describe the specific roles of the guerrilla units, I have not provided descriptive details of the entire operation.

sufficient resources to fend off a Japanese invasion. These individuals were not just abandoned, but their rescue – the rescue of the Philippines - was prioritized below that of the European Theater.

As a consequence, the conventional military had no choice but to allow these forces to act in a completely autonomous manner, for who can direct someone how to survive? No interference from outside commands, along with growing logistical support enabled guerrilla units on Luzon to effectively work by, with, and through the Filipino people. In a three year period, the guerrillas' intelligence networks had grown so extensive that scarcely a village on Luzon was not sympathetic to the cause against the Japanese. Creating this type of control over a large area required a culture, organization, and tactics that would have been alien to the conventionally-minded SWPA command. In the end, it was a fortunate irony that the inability of conventional forces to interfere enabled the LGAF units to develop over time, with small victories eventually building to the Allied invasion.

Liddell Hart defines the indirect approach as one that seeks to dislocate the enemy's balance in order to produce a decision.[37] The LGAF units effectively did this prior to the American invasion in 1945. Inherent to most indirect approaches is the necessity of time or protraction. Conditions granted this on Luzon. The unavailability of resources and lack of priority facilitated the time necessary to conduct indirect insurgent warfare. Without the constraint of *only* being able to use an indirect approach, it is likely SWPA commanders would have chosen a more attritional direct approach with disastrous results.

### 2. Environmental Conditions

The conditions in the Philippines certainly were favorable to the success of the irregular units. The Americans and the Filipinos had a long established working relationship. American presence for 40 plus years enabled the Americans to understand and appreciate Filipino culture and allowed the majority of Filipinos to learn English, thereby facilitating communications. Americans were also not regarded as occupiers, but

[37] Hart, Liddell, B. H., *Strategy* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, 1967), 31.

more as care-takers ensuring a smooth transition to Filipino independence, as promised prior to WW II. No one better embodied this American-Filipino relationship than General MacArthur himself. The Filipino people wholly believed in MacArthur, and he was, without a doubt, an icon throughout Filipino society. Their affection for him was a direct reflection of the fact that he understood his followers perfectly.[38] This understanding and affection for the Filipino people led to a synergy between him, their cause, the LGAF efforts, and an unswerving dedication to retake the Philippines fueled by his personal feelings of betrayal. Lastly, the Japanese continuously alienated and enraged the Philippine people through the atrocities they committed over the three year occupation. Some feel that the Japanese failed to sufficiently exploit MacArthur's abandonment and perceived betrayal of the islands. The Japanese could have used this along with their claim they were liberating the Asian nations colonized by Europe and America.[39] However, by never understanding and embracing the Filipino people, the Japanese merely added fuel to the fire. Without engaging the people peacefully, the Japanese facilitated an environment favorable to the American-Filipino cause throughout their three year long occupation.

### 3. Division of Labor

Finally, the operational and strategic advantages that occurred thanks to the division of labor between the guerrilla units and the conventional army provided the foundation for success throughout the campaign. Successful campaigns seek not only effectiveness, but efficiency as well. In military operations, efficiency requires the planner to use his mix of forces in the appropriate manner to reduce casualties and swiftly attain the objective. All too often in American history military leaders have used the wrong mix of forces, yet still achieved "effectiveness" by throwing numbers of troops at the conflict and winning through pure mass against heavily fortified, but outnumbered enemies. World War II provides many examples of just such scenarios. However, the Liberation of the Philippines presents an alternative.

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[38] Norling, 45.

[39] Lapham and Norling, 9-10.

Former guerrilla leader Robert Lapham affirms the idea of the success of attrition warfare by acknowledging that the Allied effort would have still achieved victory in the Philippines without the use of irregular forces. What remains undeniable, though, is the many American and Filipino lives saved through the efficiency provided by regular U.S. troops and irregular troops fighting side by side and complementing one another's strengths and weaknesses.[40] Irregular forces provided the conventional troops with intelligence, guides, local support, and augmentees of troops, while the conventional forces provided the supplies, support, and legitimacy required to conduct sustained irregular operations. The Philippines provides an exceptional example of how these two differently organized and differently oriented forces supported each after having been physically cut off and separated, to being fully integrated during the Cabanatuan raid and subsequent push across Luzon.

[40] Lapham and Norling, 222.

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# III. OSS INTEGRATION: BURMA 1942-1945

## A. BACKGROUND

In 1937 the Japanese invaded China and over the course of two years of fighting secured and controlled all major ports and cities on China's coastline. The U.S.'s only direct logistical route to supply the Chinese army was along a monumentally difficult logistical route that came via sea to the port of Rangoon, from which supplies would then travel by rail alongside the Irrawaddy River, turning east across the mountains into Lashio, where they would then travel the Burma Road to Kunming, China to assist the armies of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek.[41] Within days after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the bombing of the Philippines, and the subsequent invasion of the Philippines, Japan invaded Burma in hopes of isolating the Chinese from any external support being provided by the Allied forces. The Japanese invaded Burma from the south through Thailand and quickly overwhelmed a contingent of ill-prepared British, Indian, and Burmese forces.

Major General Joseph W. Stilwell arrived in China in March of 1942 to assume the Chief of Staff position of Allied Forces under Chiang Kai-shek. In a late attempt to stop the Japanese advance and defend the Burma Road, Stilwell entered Burma with two Chinese divisions. Out-numbered and out-skilled, Stilwell's forces, along with the other Allied forces, were swiftly defeated as Mandalay fell to the Japanese in May. Cut off from supplies and routes back to China, a humiliated Stilwell and his staff walked out of Burma to safety in India. General Stilwell's summary of the defeat in Burma was, "I claim we got a hell of a beating. We got run out of Burma and it is as humiliating as hell. I think we ought to find out what caused it, go back, and retake it."[42] These comments, combined with the China-Burma-India (CBI) Theater being relegated as a low priority in

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[41] Roger Hilsman, *American Guerrilla: My War Behind Japanese Lines* (New York: Brassey's (US), Inc., 1990), 73.

[42] William R. Peers and Dean Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road: The Story of America's Most Successful Guerrilla Force* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1963), 56.

the war effort, played a major role in Stilwell's decision to accept and utilize unorthodox methods to fight and defeat the Japanese.

Detachment 101, of the newly formed Office of Strategic Services (OSS), proved to be just the unorthodox force that could enhance Stilwell's ability to construct a new lifeline to China with the building of the Ledo Road.[43] Detachment 101 provided invaluable support to American, British, and Chinese forces throughout the Burma Campaign. By recruiting, training, and utilizing indigenous Kachins of Burma, Detachment 101 established not only a viable force to be reckoned with, but also a network similar to that of the Luzon guerrillas. Detachment 101's Kachin guerrillas provided intelligence gathering, advance force capability, and stood ready to engage in sabotage, CAS, and CSAR operations. Throughout the war, Detachment 101 conducted a pattern of operations that often included a force ratio of 300 native and Chinese soldiers to four Detachment 101 personnel.[44] This utilization of economy of force enabled the Allied commands to maximize their forces during a time when most assets, resources, and soldiers were concentrating on the Normandy landings with OPERATION OVERLORD preparations. Again, as in the Philippines, the inability to conduct a large conventional land assault early on required an unconventional approach that ultimately led to the defeat of the Japanese in Burma.

The Burma Campaign shares many similarities with what occurred in the Philippines between the guerrillas and SWPA command. This chapter examines how organizational and personality differences created initial friction between the different units. However, with Burma's designation as a lower priority and the subsequent limits on available resources, decision makers were forced (again) to develop and accept an unconventional solution. Paramount in establishing this unconventional option was General William J. Donovan, founder of the OSS, and his influence at the National Command Authority (NCA) level. Donovan's ability to recognize the requirements,

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[43] Some historical accounts have recognized the 5307th Provisional Regiment (Merrill's Marauders) as a SOF-type organization. I disagree with this assertion due to the manner in which it was operationally utilized as an infantry regiment. In comparison with the unconventional role that Detachment 101 played throughout the campaign, the Marauders acted as a conventional component. For the purpose of this thesis, the 5307th was a general purpose force (GPF) that Detachment 101 supported.

[44] Hilsman, 182, 200.

convince the national and operational decision makers, and organize an unconventional unit to implement a new strategy enabled the Allied forces to reap the benefits that proper economy of force offers. In conclusion, the Burma Campaign offers valuable insights into the inner workings of a conventional command with authority over an unconventional unit and how these diverse units integrated to maximize the use of foreign forces to achieve victory.

## B. OSS'S INCEPTION INTO THE BURMA CAMPAIGN

### 1. Personalities

The two most notable personalities who contributed either directly or indirectly during the Burma Campaign were General Joseph W. Stilwell and General William J. Donovan. These two charismatic figures provided some of the crucial building blocks for developing and implementing an unconventional strategy. Their combination of innovative vision and brashness with little regard for consequences proved to be an ideal match for the time and circumstances. Though at times Stilwell's overbearing persona caused problems, these two men displayed a willingness to place ingenuity ahead of a more singularly conservative, conventionally-oriented strategy for victory. Thus, it is essential to examine more deeply the traits of these leaders in the performance of their duties at both the strategic and operational levels.

Unlike most of his counterparts, "Vinegar Joe" Stilwell was uncommunicative by nature, and therefore lacked the traits of articulateness and persuasiveness. He regularly resented having to explain operational proposals and actions to his superiors who he often regarded as rank amateurs on the subject.[45] A characteristic that did embolden Stilwell to accept ideas regarding an indirect approach to a problem was his ability to not remain narrowly focused on a conventional solution. General George Marshall recruited Stilwell to the Infantry School at Fort Benning specifically for his ability to experiment, to accept

[45] Arquilla, ed., *From Troy to Entebbe: Special Operations in Ancient and Modern Times*, "The Road to Myitkyina," by Ronald Spector (New York: University Press of America, Inc., 1996), 277.

new solutions, and to welcome the unorthodox if it showed promise.[46] This is not to say that Stilwell was a complete unconventional thinker, it merely suggests that under the right conditions, with few options, Stilwell was not averse to stepping beyond the "conventional box." This may be attributed to his experience in World War I and the subsequent early stages of transformation, during the period between the wars, as everyone sought to avoid the brutality of trench warfare. In any event, early on Stilwell demonstrated a willingness to diverge from the norms when challenged with a unique situation.

Such a situation revealed itself with Stilwell's defeat in the first Burma Campaign. "For Stilwell, the bitterness of defeat roused him to remarkable feats of energy, with ambitious plans to build up the remnants of the Chinese 22 and 38 Divisions to a force that could re-enter northern Burma and open up a road to China."[47] Stilwell understood that he would be fighting a war with mostly limited numbers of foreign and American troops due to the unwillingness of the U.S. to plan for an Expeditionary Force into Burma. This lack of American-trained and quality soldiers left Stilwell open to unconventional ideas and his subsequent push for small units of personnel to train and equip the Chinese Divisions attracted the attention of then-Colonel William J. Donovan. Donovan would soon propose his own visionary ideas to Stilwell that would elaborate on and improve Stilwell's Northern Burma plan, to include the preplanned integration of Stilwell's conventional forces with Donovan's unconventional Detachment 101.

William J. Donovan was a man with an unclouded vision of warfare; specifically, he believed that a centralized intelligence agency was required to gather and analyze information beyond just the short-term operational or tactical level that the Army and Navy intelligence units offered. In a memorandum to President Roosevelt dated June 10, 1941, Donovan expressed his concern for the inadequate strategic value that these branch units offered: "…these services cannot, out of the very nature of things, obtain that accurate, comprehensive, long-range information without which no strategic board can

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[46] Barbara W. Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China, 1911-45* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1970), 123.

[47] E. D. Smith, *Battle for Burma* (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, Inc., 1979), 37.

plan for the future."[48] Though Donovan's plan received condemnation from Army Chief of Staff General Marshall, President Roosevelt's confidence in Donovan's philosophy provided the approval to organize the position of Coordinator of Information (COI).

Despite his backing from President Roosevelt, Donovan often had to fight off attacks from the military brass who felt that the COI was simply trying to horn in on the war.[49] The charismatic Colonel soon realized that in order for his organization to survive, he would have to take necessary actions to make his unit attractive to the military. This opportunity came with Stilwell's defeat in Burma. After acquiescing to Stilwell's choice for the Detachment 101 commander in order to receive the General's approval of COI's intelligence and irregular warfare plans for Burma, Donovan immediately petitioned President Roosevelt to place the COI under the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS).[50] Donovan understood that in a wartime environment he would have to give up some of his autonomy and further integrate with the military to effectively launch the unorthodox operations he envisioned. On June 13, 1942, President Roosevelt abolished the COI and created the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), headed by Donovan and under control of the JCS. Donovan's tireless efforts ensured that some medium of unity of effort would arise from the joining of the OSS and JCS.[51] His personal connections, distinguished military career, and imperturbable attributes created the foundations for the integration of special operations and conventional forces, at least in Burma. The men chosen to lead Detachment 101 likewise had similar traits and some had preexisting relationships with Stilwell which greatly benefited the Allied effort in Burma.

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[48] Richard Dunlop, *Donovan: America's Master Spy* (New York: Rand McNally and Company, 1982), 285.

[49] Ibid., 346.

[50] In *American Guerrilla: My War Behind Japanese Lines*, pg. 121, Roger Hilsman notes that Stilwell had been acquainted with Colonel Carl Eifler, then a reserve officer, when the two were stationed in Hawaii together. This represents Donovan's willingness to accept give-and-take offers in his proposals to ensure mission acceptance. Specifically, he must have understood the significant benefits that would accrue from this pre-existing relationship in regards to unit coordination.

[51] Dunlop, 346-354.

### 2. Organizational and Cultural Differences

The organizational structure in Burma was much different than that developed in the Philippines. The organizational structure of Detachment 101 was not sporadically spread across an area with no decisive central authority, as was the case with the LGAF. Nevertheless, the overall conventional structures of sub-organizations across Southeast Asia did grow quite confusing. Stilwell wore four hats: Deputy Supreme Allied Commander (SAC); commander of Americans in CBI; Chief of Staff to the Generalissimo; and operational commander of Northern Combat Area Command (NCAC). Detachment 101's unconventional role would fall directly under operational control of General Stilwell's NCAC. Initially, however, wading through the myriad of undermanned headquarters often caused friction as these staffs attempted to engulf the Detachment 101 officers for their own needs. Most staffs could not understand why these officers were wasting their time on such menial operations as guerrilla warfare and espionage. "Their thinking was along conventional military lines, and anything to the contrary was sacrilegious."[52]

This conventional mindset still occasionally emerged in Stilwell even though he had approved Donovan's operational plan for Detachment 101. The General had his doubts concerning the unit's ability to integrate and assist in his overarching Burma campaign. In their first meeting, Stilwell was resolute in his belief that Colonel Carl Eifler's Detachment 101 unit had no place in Asia, let alone Burma. However, soon after that first meeting, Stilwell reluctantly gave the colonel 90 days to develop and execute an intelligence and guerrilla-warfare operation behind Japanese lines. Stilwell's initial directive for Detachment 101 was broad in nature as he directed Eifler to establish a base camp in Northeast India to deny the Japanese use of or access to Myitkyina airport and to liaise with the British in order to coordinate operations and avoid mutual interference. Stilwell's previous relationship with Eifler most likely contributed to his decision to

[52] Peers and Brelis, 38.

allow Eifler to operate and plan semi-autonomously. Ultimately, Stilwell's expectations for Detachment 101 were summarized in his statement to Eifler, "All I want to hear are booms from the Burma jungle."[53]

Through coordination and advice from the British, Eifler decided to establish Detachment 101's secret base in Nazira, Assam. The site was chosen for its ideal location away from British and American Army installations so that guerrilla-type training could take place without worrying about inquisitive eyes or questioning from the conventional forces in the area. Unlike the conventional Allied forces, Detachment 101 took advantage of the knowledge that the Kachins provided concerning the jungle environment, terrain, and enemy methods with which the Detachment 101 operators were themselves unfamiliar. Instead of relying solely on the secret texts and training manuals based on espionage and guerrilla experiences in Europe, Detachment 101 utilized the Burma natives' experiences to develop a training program and operational concept conducive to the Burma environment.[54] Such sharing of information provided Detachment 101 the ability to create an organization designed specifically to match the task at hand to the environment in order to execute a productive, efficient, and effective outcome.

### 3. Coordination

Coordination among the multitude of Allied forces commands was a constant consideration for Detachment 101 and its guerrilla bands. Over the course of the campaign, the relationship between Stilwell and British commanders became strained.[55] Stilwell had explicitly directed Detachment 101 to coordinate its operations with the British, most likely in an attempt to reduce his interaction with those commanders. This effort was often accompanied by friction and a lack of two-way communications. Most

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[53] Richard Dunlop, *Behind Japanese Lines: With the OSS in Burma* (New York: Rand McNally, 1979), 109.

[54] Peers and Brelis, 61-68.

[55] Smith, 68-70. Stilwell and Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten, Supreme Allied Commander Southeast Asia, had a tumultuous relationship. The two disagreed on the operational campaign plan for Burma, with the height of tensions being reached when Stilwell sent his own representatives to Washington to argue against Mountbatten's plan. Washington accepted Stilwell's plan and thus began the turbulent command arrangements in the CBI Theater.

communication problems were the result of personality differences, underappreciation of roles, or the British commanders' assumption that they were the lead force in what had been a British colony. Detachment 101 was in the unique position of having to operate under Stilwell's guidance while simultaneously de-conflicting with the other Allied forces commands.

Coordination with Stilwell consisted of radio communications and personal meetings with the general at his headquarters located in the Hukawng Valley. Upon the initial formation and training of indigenous forces, Detachment 101 utilized their ingenuity to design man-pack radios from spare parts acquired through Service of Supply warehouses in Chabua and the Indian civilian market in Calcutta.[56] These radios allowed the units in the field to feed situational and intelligence reports back to Nazira during their preliminary operations, where they were forwarded to Stilwell's command. Whenever Stilwell had formal orders for Detachment 101, he would recall the detachment commander to his headquarters for an in-depth course of action brief in support of NCAC's conventional forces. Such was the case with the planned seizure of Myitkyina airfield in which Detachment 101 would support Stilwell's two Chinese Divisions and the American Marauders as they converged on to Myitkyina.[57] Unlike the environment in the Philippines, this ability to meet face-to-face enabled commander and operator the opportunity to effectively communicate and coordinate all aspects of the operation to ensure unity of effort.

Stilwell's outward animosity toward the British commanders may have caused initial strains between Detachment 101 and British forces; however, the personalities of the 101 personnel, combined with their growing intelligence network, minimized the negative effects that such tensions caused. The different Allied units that operated in the CBI Theater were subject to an overlapping web of confusion concerning who commanded what forces within a particular area of operations. Detachment 101's coordination and sometimes integration with British forces allowed it to develop relationships that mitigated friction with British commanders who felt that any units that

[56] Dunlop, *Behind Japanese Lines*, 124-125.

[57] Peers and Brelis, 18-19.

operated within their AOs fell strictly under British command.[58] Whenever coordination did fail, Detachment 101's expanding intelligence network averted any accidental friendly-on-friendly situations that might otherwise have occurred. On at least one occasion, Detachment 101 Kachin guerrillas reported that Japanese forces were attempting to locate a British combat force in the area of the Imphal Front. Detachment 101 was working in the area and had reported its operations to British authorities prior to its departure; however, the British failed to communicate back that they, too, would be conducting operations in the vicinity.[59]

Ironically, coordination of efforts proved more challenging in Burma than among the LGAF units in the Philippines due to conflicting opinions among the overlapping commands about how best to conduct offensive measures against the Japanese in the CBI Theater. In the Philippines the LGAF had to work everything out among themselves on the ground. This proved a blessing in disguise. Yet, despite the sometimes poor coordination, Detachment 101's direct authority under Stilwell and its diplomatic approach to British authorities alleviated much of the friction and confusion that might otherwise have plagued it – and did plague efforts in China.

## C. SUPPORTING ROLES

### 1. Force Multiplier

Much like the LGAF units in the Philippines, Detachment 101 would prove to be an exceptional force multiplier to the Allied effort in Burma. What stands in contrast to the Philippines, however, was the intentional preplanned use of such an unconventional force in direct support of conventional units. After Stilwell's defeat in the first Burma campaign, Donovan determined that the Japanese fifth column's espionage and sabotage operations had demoralized and exhausted the strength of Stilwell's forces through the use of irregular tactics. He soon convinced Stilwell that a similarly designed guerrilla-type unit could provide invaluable assistance in support of Allied forces.[60] Donovan's

[58] Peers and Brelis, 67. Dunlop, *Behind Japanese Lines*, 140-142.

[59] Peers and Brelis, 86.

[60] Corey Ford, *Donovan of OSS*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1970), 217.

vision and Stilwell's recognition of the potential effectiveness of a simultaneous direct and indirect assault would shape the concept of operations for NCAC's push to secure the Myitkyina airfield and break the Japanese hold on North Burma.

Stilwell's plan to retake Myitkyina would involve the effort of units derived from multiple nations. The Chinese 22nd and 38th Divisions would mount a direct assault through the Hukawng Valley while Merrill's Marauders operated as a northern flanking force. The 30th Chinese Division would be held in reserve with the added expectation that Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek would provide additional troops if required. The British utilization of Orde Wingate's Raiders, an irregular unit similar to Detachment 101, was also taken into account for the diversionary role it was expected to play to the south of Myitkyina. Stilwell ordered Detachment 101 to increase the size of its guerrilla force to 3000 strong and to provide timely intelligence prior to and throughout the battle as the Chinese and American forces pushed into the Japanese-held city.[61] In addition to its intelligence gathering role, Detachment 101 Kachin guerrillas would provide incalculable assistance to the conventional assault elements by acting as guides, destroying enemy lines of communications, and laying ambushes to prevent Japanese reinforcements.

As the Marauders and Chinese battled the Japanese in a conventional manner, the Kachin guerrillas applied their unorthodox methods of ambushes and raids to demoralize the enemy forces just as the Japanese had previously done to the British in the first Burma campaign. For example, the guerrillas used anti-personnel mines provided by the OSS that would fire a .30 caliber round into the foot or body when stepped on. These operations had an enormous psychological effect on the Japanese soldiers even when the numbers of ambushes were reduced and the mines were no longer used. "The threat of guerrilla ambush made the Japanese taut and tense, slow, cautious and finally paranoiac. Several Japanese prisoners volunteered the opinion that in the jungle the [Japanese] forces so feared the guerrillas that they rated one Kachin equal to ten Japanese."[62]

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[61] Peers and Brelis, 18-19.

[62] Ibid., 147.

One of the most notable assets that the Detachment 101 guerrillas provided was the freedom of movement that the conventional forces gained from the unit's operations. During the drive to Myitkyina, the native Kachin guerrillas owned the jungle like no other force. Their knowledge of the environment and their small unit operations provided the eyes and ears and, most importantly, created confidence within the large conventional force to move relatively unimpeded through such arduous terrain. The guerrilla force controlled the back trails and cut off Japanese reinforcements from the south as the Chinese and American Divisions moved unmolested to the objective.

### 2. Disutility of SOF

The benefit of implementing guerrilla activities and unconventional warfare within a unified campaign plan offers the commander the ability to execute an indirect approach that complements the direct approach of his conventional forces. All too often, though, commanders do not understand the inherent limitations that exist with such irregular units. This *dis*utility of forces can lead to disastrous results if not properly identified and rectified by the operational commanders. Such was the case with General Stilwell at various times throughout the 2nd Burma Campaign.

For instance, the British Chindits were a unit designed to be similar to Detachment 101. Originally intended by Major General Orde Wingate to be a long range penetration outfit, the Chindits were to establish a body of troops behind enemy lines and be re-supplied by air. Their role in Burma was to disrupt the supply and logistics for frontline Japanese divisions through the destruction of roads, bridges, railways, ammunition stores, and convoys.[63] The Chindits proved effective in this capacity in their support for Stilwell's Chinese and American Divisions during the battle for Myitkyina. The unit was situated south of Myitkyina and disrupted the Japanese lines of communications and hampered their ability to reinforce their divisions with equipment and personnel. Stilwell, however, then ordered the Chindits to attack the town of Mogaung, which was heavily fortified and controlled by the Japanese. The undermanned Chindits bravely followed the general's orders while suffering horrendous casualties.

[63] David Rooney, *Guerrilla: Insurgents, Patriots and Terrorists from Sun Tzu to Bin Laden,* (London: Brassey's, 2004), 189.

Though they succeeded in capturing Mogaung, the entire unit was soon evacuated to hospitals due to the physical damage they suffered.

Since Mountbatten disbanded the unit in early 1945, the seizure of Mogaung would be one of the last operations conducted by the Chindits. This utilization of an unconventional force in a conventional manner highlights the disastrous effect that can come from a commander not comprehending the capabilities of his forces. "Stilwell had totally misunderstood the purpose of the Chindits and the differences between the capabilities of a lightly armored, long-range penetration unit and a unit equipped and trained to take and hold ground."[64] This misuse of forces may have been averted if it were not for the untimely death of Wingate in the spring of 1944. Wingate's replacement was Major General Walter David Alexander Lentaigne, a man who was not in tune with Wingate's methods or general philosophy. Had Wingate still been alive when General Stilwell handed down his orders, it is likely that Wingate would have been in a much stronger position to argue against and reject that misappropriation of his force due to his dominant personality and his profound knowledge of the capabilities of his unorthodox unit.[65] Personalities of commanders become critical factors in impressing upon others the inefficiencies that result from the disutility of forces.

Similar to the Chindits, Detachment 101 also faced the conventionalization of its forces towards the end of the campaign as the Allied Forces began pushing south through Burma. However, unlike the Chindits, Detachment 101 proved highly efficient and effective at adapting to a combined direct and indirect approach as its growing number of guerrillas accommodated such operations. By 1945, the unit numbered a total of 250 American officers, 750 American enlisted and 10,000 native guerrillas, who together comprised four battalions.[66] After the relief of General Stilwell and the division of the CBI Theater into the India-Burma Theater and the China Theater, Lieutenant General Daniel I. Sultan was placed in command of the India-Burma Theater. Sultan questioned

64 Roger Hilsman, 148.

65 David Rooney, 194.

66 Peers and Brelis, 180-193.

Detachment 101's commander, then Colonel William R. Peers, as to whether the detachment could seize the Taunggyi-Kentung road while clearing the Japanese from the area.

Wanting to achieve the objectives established by Sultan, Peers discussed options with his battalion commanders and developed a plan to combine the use of conventional and unconventional tactics. Detachment 101's final push south began in April of 1945. Peers pushed autonomy down to the battalion commanders and the battalions established no prescribed pattern of tactics; they simply adapted and applied whatever form of tactics the requirements and scheme of maneuvers called for.[67] By June, through a combination of direct frontal assaults, raids, ambushes, and aerial bombardment, Detachment 101 had pushed the Japanese south to Taunggyi where the battalions linked up with the British 64th Brigade. Peers' decision to allow his forces to be utilized in a conventional role was one that proved successful only after considerable consideration was given to his unit's capabilities and how they might best adapt to an array of tactics. Critical to the success and relatively low casualties incurred in this operation was the intelligence network that Detachment 101 had established over the previous three years; this network generated ample advance knowledge about Japanese strengths and dispositions. Peers understood the enemy's strengths and weaknesses as well as those of his own force, and Sultan's consultation concerning the feasibility of such an operation provided the foundation for success.

## D. BURMA ANALYSIS

### 1. Absence of Alternatives

As previously discussed, the European Theater was the priority of the Allied effort while the CBI Theater struggled to gain the resources required to counter the Japanese advance. Though General Stilwell may not have thought well of applying unconventional forces or techniques within Burma initially, his defeat in the first Burma Campaign and his inability to convince the strategic decision-makers to provide an

[67] Peers and Brelis, 194-195.

American Expeditionary Force most likely weighed heavily in his decision to accept General Donovan's and the OSS's proposals.

Consequently, Stilwell's inexperience with such an unorthodox unit may have indirectly played a role in his willingness to allow Detachment 101 to establish itself within the theater with only broad guidance from Stilwell himself.[68] This enabled the detachment to recruit and train natives in a manner that avoided direct conventional intervention. The low prioritization of Burma permitted this relationship between a conventional and unconventional command to persist through most of the war. With no expeditionary force in sight, Detachment 101 effectively utilized a period of three years to establish and grow social contacts and recruit from a variety of native ethnic groups. Just as in the Philippines, this factor of time, that is so paramount when conducting an irregular campaign, enabled the development of an intelligence network reaching across the entire country of Burma, and continuously reported on Japanese positions and dispositions.

To the extent that Detachment 101 required time to organize its operations, so too did Stilwell as he sought to train the Chinese Divisions and press Washington for an American Division. Detachment 101 provided Stilwell with the time and crucial intelligence reporting on Japanese forces to facilitate the NCAC commander's ability to reorganize the Chinese Divisions and prepare an operational plan to retake Burma. Without this period of preparation, Stilwell's egotistical personality may have pushed him towards recommitting troops to Burma with devastating results.

### 2. Environmental Conditions

As with conditions in the Philippines, Burma offered a favorable environment for an irregular force in which to operate. Though not all Burmese were as indignant towards the Japanese as most Filipinos were, Detachment 101's integration with the Kachin people and subsequent guerrilla operations allowed for a slow reversal in the Burmese people's point of view. The Japanese restricted the individual liberties of the Burmese more than the British had when they were the colonial power. With every

[68] Ibid., 20.

guerrilla and espionage operation, the Burmese recognized and welcomed the return of Allied forces while slowly becoming more willing to rebel against the harsh Japanese. Critical in this ability to turn around the Burmese were the aggregate effects of Detachment 101 and British units.[69] The fact that the British had long experience in Burma through colonial rule was essential in providing Detachment 101 with initial contacts to the Kachins. The Kachins, in turn, were instrumental in Detachment 101 operations throughout the war, comprising the majority of the guerrilla operators. Without their knowledge of the difficult jungle, back trails, and contacts across the country, Detachment 101 would not have been nearly as efficient and effective in conducting irregular operations.

### 3. Division of Labor

In the conduct of any campaign or operation where conventional and unconventional forces are used in unison, the appropriate division of labor ensures that each force's strengths are maximized while the inherent complementary roles of the forces bolster and enhance each individual unit's weaknesses. Burma illustrates this through the integration of Detachment 101 with Stilwell's NCAC. A critical weakness to any conventional component is its ability to gather accurate and timely intelligence throughout all phases of an operation and campaign. Alternatively, the limitation of an irregular force becomes the capacity with which it can be re-supplied in a similarly timely manner. The strengths of regular and irregular forces are the former's ability to place overwhelming fire power on target while the latter acts as a force multiplier through the use of indigenous forces.

Detachment 101 and NCAC offer an example of how success can be achieved more efficiently through the coordination and merging of divergent capabilities. The irregular units in Burma provided NCAC with 85 to 95 % of all usable intelligence and at various points in the war designated between 60 to 85 % of all targets attacked by the 10th Air Force, while additionally relaying accurate bomb damage assessment reports.[70] In supporting the guerrilla efforts across Northern Burma and the eventual southern push in

[69] Peers and Brelis, 221.

[70] Peers and Brelis, 219.

1944, NCAC continuously provided air drops to re-supply the units with weapons, ammunition, food, and water. In North Burma when air crews' morale begin to dissipate with the loss of personnel and aircraft from attacks by Japanese Zero's, Detachment 101 commanders gave personal assurances that their irregular unit would go in and recover any downed pilot in the Burma Theater.[71] This mutual appreciation of efforts and trust established a binding relationship that remained strong throughout the campaign.

Finally, a great deal of credit for the successful and competent integration of Detachment 101 and the conventional Allied Forces in Burma must be attributed to the continuity developed at the commander level. As was the case in the Philippines, very few changes at the operational commander level took place during the 3 ½ year engagement in Burma. NCAC was commanded by Stilwell until his replacement in 1944 by Sultan, and Detachment 101 was similarly commanded by only two people, Eifler and Peers, up until the unit's disbandment in 1945. The stability at the commander position nurtured a mutual respect and admiration of each force's unique capabilities that was initially non-existent. Each developed an understanding and appreciation for one another's attributes and personalities, enabling a smoother working relationship and thus an efficient unity of effort.

[71] Dunlop, *Behind Japanese Lines*, 147-148.

# IV. WARS OF TODAY: AFGHANISTAN AND IRAQ

## A. BACKGROUND

The events of September 11, 2001 have made for stark comparisons to the attack of Pearl Harbor by the Japanese in 1941. It is not completely clear whether Osama bin Laden's attack against the U.S. was an attempt to force a policy of isolationism and deter the U.S. from engaging in Arab countries around the world; however, many have surmised that this was al-Qaeda's goal, as were the similar intentions of the Japanese to keep the U.S. out of W.W. II. Regardless, the reality of the aftermath of 9/11 has proved reminiscent to the response of Pearl Harbor. September 11, 2001 united the American public, who expected and demanded swift retaliatory strikes against al-Qaeda and the Afghanistan Taliban regime that provided safe haven for al-Qaeda's recruitment, training, and planning. Within one month of the 9/11 attacks, SOF teams were on the ground in Afghanistan working by, with, and through Northern Alliance units in preparation for combined offensive combat operations against the Taliban.[72] In coordination with Northern Alliance forces, small numbers of SOF teams directed precision air strikes against Taliban infrastructure targets that ultimately led to the fall of the Taliban government in December of 2001. Ongoing operations to destroy a resurgent Taliban and al-Qaeda network in Afghanistan along with reconstruction and stability operations continue as of the time of this thesis submittal.

If 9/11 was an attempt to withdraw the U.S. presence from around the world, the opposite effect is what soon occurred. One year after al-Qaeda's attacks on the U.S. Homeland, President George W. Bush signed the 2002 National Security Strategy of the United States of America (2002 NSS). Preemption, not isolation, became the dominant foreign policy of the U.S., which sought to engage imminent threats abroad. Though the U.S. has always maintained the option of preemption, past policies' foundations were built to counter a traditional or conventional enemy and threat. The 2002 NSS specifically identifies rogue states and terrorists as the new threats and addresses these

[72] Stephen Biddle, *Afghanistan and the Future of Warfare: Implications for Army and Defense Policy*; (November 2002), available from http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/PUB109.pdf; Internet; accessed on 14 February 2006, 8.

adversaries as enemies who do not follow the principle norms of the law of armed conflict. NSS 2002 regards inaction as a greater risk than action, even when uncertainty about a specific imminent danger exists.[73]

Thus, the 2002 NSS set the stage for the invasion of Iraq as the U.S. government and its allies perceived that Iraq's unmonitored Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) program presented an imminent danger to the U.S. and its allies. I do not attempt to argue for or against the reasoning behind invading Iraq; I am only analyzing the coordination, integration, and effectiveness of conventional and unconventional forces once the decision to invade was made by President Bush. On March 19, 2003, U.S. and Coalition forces began a bombing campaign, with a land campaign soon to follow to remove Saddam Hussein from power and secure Iraq's WMD program. As in the 1991 Gulf War, Iraqi forces proved to be vastly inferior to those of the U.S. and Coalition forces, as the predominately U.S. and British coalition pushed through Iraqi defenses relatively easily in only a three week period; Baghdad fell on April 9, 2003. On May 1, 2003 aboard the carrier USS Abraham Lincoln, President Bush prematurely declared: "Major combat operations in Iraq have ended. In the battle of Iraq, the United States and our allies have prevailed."[74] The irony of the president's remarks is represented by the number of Coalition soldiers who have died in Iraq since the president's declaration: 2360, as compared to only 173 in the first phase of the war.[75] The removal of Saddam's regime created a security vacuum that enabled loyal Sunni Bathists to spawn an insurgency aided by foreign fighters infiltrated into Iraq, many of whom have direct ties to al-Qaeda. Since May 1, 2003 Coalition forces have had limited successes in defeating the growing insurgency as raids, suicide bombings, and religious tensions continue to increase and are creating fears that civil war may erupt throughout Iraq.

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[73] NKA, *2002 United States National Security Strategy*, available from http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html; Internet; accessed on 28 March 2006.

[74] George W. Bush, *President Bush Announces Major Combat Operations in Iraq have Ended*, (Remarks by the President from the USS Abraham Lincoln at sea off the coast of San Diego, CA; May 1, 2003), available from http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/05/20030501-15.html; Internet; accessed on 28 March 2006.

[75] NKA, *Iraq Coalition Casualty Count*, available from http://icasualties.org/oif/; Internet; accessed on 28 March 2006. These figures are accurate as of the date cited as accessing the referenced website.

This chapter offers a preliminary examination of the similarities and the differences between the campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq on the one hand, and the campaigns in the Philippines and Burma on the other. In particular, I discuss the factors of environmental conditions, force capabilities, increased technological advantages/disadvantages, coordination, integration, and unity of effort. I focus specifically on the integration of current conventional and unconventional forces at both the strategic and operational levels from before invasion through current operations. Recommendations for future improvements to increase effective and efficient integration will be outlined in Chapter V.

## B. AFGHANISTAN

### 1. Environmental Conditions

As was the case for the Philippines and Burma, an absence of alternatives drove the use of unconventional forces to begin combat operations in Afghanistan. However, unlike the Philippines and Burma, Afghanistan was not a lower priority than other engagements around the world. In fact, it was the only immediate priority. September 11, 2001 produced obvious pressures from the American public to act decisively and quickly. These pressures in and of themselves helped force the decision makers in Washington to put American boots on the ground in Afghanistan as swiftly as possible.[76] Afghanistan's geographic location made it nearly impossible to launch mechanized battalions across the borders. SOF forces became the only means by which to infiltrate the country with a relatively small footprint and reduced logistical support.

Another crucial dimension of the environment in Afghanistan was a flattened hierarchy for decision-making and force-planning from early October 2001 to March of 2002. Conventional forces supported the SOF infiltration with aerial firepower superiority and supply drops; however, the conventional forces' typical structure with many bureaucratic layers above the war-fighter was absent due to their inability to reach the battlefield. SOF forces were given an almost unprecedented degree of autonomy against an enemy that many feared, given their past successes against the British and the

[76] Bob Andrews, Principle Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict; Interview conducted on 28 February 2006.

Soviets. This dilution of central control and limited guidance enabled the SOF professionals to conduct their type of warfare without the external restraints that usually inhibit unconventional warfare.[77]

The final key piece of the Afghanistan environment was the availability of an indigenous force by, through, and with which SOF personnel could work. The Northern Alliance and local Afghan tribes provided the proxy force necessary for conducting offensive operations to remove the Taliban from power. The motivation of the Northern Alliance and various tribes enabled SOF personnel to build a rapport with these forces that evolved rather quickly in a territory and culture that was quite alien to U.S. forces who entered the country so soon after 9/11. In some instances, U.S. forces landed in Afghanistan, linked up with anti-Taliban forces, and were conducting integrated combat operations within hours of the initial meeting.[78] Similar to the Philippines and Burma, SOF personnel were able to utilize indigenous people as not only a force multiplier, but to increase their awareness and understanding of a territory that U.S. personnel had very little experience in. Thanks to the existence of SOF forces post-W.W. II, these unconventional warfare capabilities have been enhanced and institutionalized within a small segment of the U.S. military and have greatly reduced the "learn as you go" conduct of unconventional warfare. The initial months of the Afghanistan War demonstrated what a limited number of highly trained unconventional forces could achieve by working autonomously with local entities while being supplied with adequate support from conventional assets. Yet, these successes became limited once the gateway to Afghanistan opened up to additional forces and the conduct of war grew convoluted with more centralized authority.

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[77] Robert D. Kaplan, "Think Global, Fight Local," *Wall Street Journal*, 19 December 2003, [Web Site]; available from http://www.defenddemocracy.org/research_topics/research_topics_show.htm?doc_id=201866&attrib_id=7575; Internet; accessed on 29 March 2006.

[78] NKA, *PBS Frontline Interview with Colonel John Mulholland*, available from http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/campaign/interviews/mulholland.html; accessed on 29 March 2006.

### 2. Unity of Effort

The early stages of Afghanistan demonstrated an exceptional unity of effort between conventional and unconventional forces. Precision air strikes guided by small SOF teams on the ground decapitated the organizational structure of the Taliban and decimated the Taliban's ability to hold any significant ground. In fact, the early offensive operations proceeded so quickly that the U.S. State Department urged the operational commanders to slow down the offensive in order for the State Department to negotiate with the Taliban.[79] Some have argued that despite the use of indigenous forces to support the American advancement, Afghanistan was much more a conventional battle than an unconventional one. Stephen Biddle notes that "…it [Afghanistan] was a surprisingly orthodox air-ground theater campaign in which heavy fire support decided a contest between two land forces."[80] I fully agree with Mr. Biddle's initial assessment; however, I believe that the relationships forged between the Afghan irregular forces and U.S. SOF personnel were the foundation for an unconventional war plan that never completely emerged. Also, the successful targeting by air assets could not have been achieved as effectively if it were not for the unconventional elements that where on the ground providing the targeting and battle damage assessment reports. The conventional war assessment would dilute the gains garnered over the first months of the war as the Taliban and al-Qaeda forces retreated back into the population and various safe havens, at the same time that U.S. conventional components fell in on top of the SOF structure.

The success of the "air-ground campaign" forced the enemy to de-conventionalize and adopt "hit and run" guerrilla tactics that had proved so successful against the Soviets in the early 80's. Ironically, this dispersed enemy was soon countered by a centralized command and control structure as more and more U.S. and Coalition forces poured into Afghanistan and began basing out of Bagram Airfield under the newly formed CJSOTF-

[79] Andrews, (28 February 2006).

[80] Biddle, 6.

Afghanistan. SOF units began losing their autonomous operational capabilities that had proved so historically successful in the first months of the war as the approval process became more layered.[81]

In addition to the bureaucracy that conventional commanders brought into Afghanistan was the conventionalization of operations that began to flow out of Bagram. OPERATION ANACONDA is one such example where a combined SOF and brigade-size operation was planned to flush out Taliban and al-Qaeda from their encampments in the Shah-i-Khot valley. What began as a two day operation turned in to two weeks of heavy fighting and significant casualties for U.S. troops and equipment, thanks to poor coordination and confusing command and control mechanisms.

Over time as the Iraq War has received greater attention and resources, Afghanistan has become a lower priority theater, similar to the Philippines and Burma, and, although this has reduced some operational inefficiencies, much is left to be accomplished to reverse what occurred when a larger footprint was established on the ground. As Dr. Kalev I. Sepp puts it: "Paradoxically, once the enemy was beaten in open combat and had transitioned to guerrilla warfare, the U.S. Central Command placed conventional division and corps commanders in overall charge of military operations in Afghanistan."[82] Afghanistan began as an enormous success; serious reverses are likely to occur unless recognition of the type of enemy currently being fought is correctly identified and the proper mix of forces and strategy is adequately applied.

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[81] Robert D. Kaplan, "Imperial Grunts: With the Army Special Forces in the Philippines and Afghanistan-Laboratories of Counterinsurgency," *The Atlantic Journal*, October 2005 [Journal Online]; available from http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200510/kaplan-us-special-forces; Internet; accessed on 30 March 2006. "Now what had previously been approved orally within minutes took three days of paperwork, with bureaucratic layers of lieutenant colonels and senior officers delaying operations and diluting them of risk."

[82] Kalev I. Sepp, "The Campaign in Transition: From Conventional to Unconventional War," *Special Warfare Magazine*, (Fort Bragg: September 2002, Vol. 15, Iss. 3, pp. 24-26); available from http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0HZY/is_3_15/ai_96442212; Internet; accessed on 30 March 2006.

## C. IRAQ

### 1. Coordination

Planning for the Iraq War took on a one dimensional shape that was heavily weighted towards a conventional style of warfare that would make use of the superiority of advanced technological weapons systems. The war planning was essentially a dusting off of the previous 1991 Gulf War plan with obvious modifications aimed at securing Baghdad and removing Saddam from power. Fresh from successes in Afghanistan, SOF units would play a much more significant role than what they were allowed to provide in 1991; however, their role was being planned by conventional commanders as one involving more direct action (DA) than unconventional warfare (UW). The perception within the "Beltway" (and Pentagon) was that Iraq would be the conventional commanders' war that they did not get to fight in Afghanistan. For instance, the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations in Low-Intensity Conflict (ASD/SOLIC) was left out of the initial planning process for the invasion.[83] In ASD/SOLIC's place, conventional planners focused on the utility of SOF in Phase I of the war (which would be DA intensive) and placed less emphasis on the reconstruction and stability operations capabilities that these forces could bring to bear through unconventional methods of engaging with and influencing the population.

The failures to look beyond the conventional military victory were based on extremely optimistic predictions about what would occur after Saddam's removal from power. Vice President Dick Cheney stated on March 16, 2003 during the taping of NBC's Meet the Press: "I really do believe that we will be greeted as liberators."[84] This mindset has since been ascertained to have been shared by policy makers and military decision makers alike prior to the invasion. Unfortunately, such a view completely missed the possibility, never mind likelihood, that an insurgency might emerge, and this made little to no preparations to defend against it. Instead, sectarian and ethnic tensions across Iraq and the Muslim world were downplayed and it was assumed that the Iraqi government would quickly recover in order to secure and stabilize the country.

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[83] Andrews, (28 February 2006).

[84] Dick Cheney, *Meet The Press*, March 16 2003, Transcript available from http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/bush/cheneymeetthepress.htm; Internet; accessed on 30 March 2006.

> The nation's most senior military commanders compounded these problems by planning for the conventional defeat of the enemy and an early exit from Iraq, by making a deliberate effort to avoid "Phase IV" and stability operations. The fact they did so to minimize the strain on the US force posture, and the "waste" of US troops on "low priority" missions played a major role in creating the conditions under which insurgency could develop and flourish.[85]

### 2. Force Capabilities/Technology

Today's U.S. and Coalition forces are much better prepared and trained to conduct counterinsurgency operations than the W.W. II soldiers of Detachment 101 and the LGAF in Burma and the Philippines. The Cold War era produced a litany of low-intensity conflicts that ultimately helped advance unconventional warfare capabilities through additional studies and operational experiences of SOF personnel. Paramount in a counterinsurgency strategy is the ability to identify and separate the insurgents from the population. To achieve this, the counterinsurgency force must win the hearts and minds of the population who can provide the intelligence required to separate the two. This may be accomplished in a number of ways; however, two essential elements involve security for the population and garnering support from the population so that those afflicted understand that this is their fight, and it is they, who will directly benefit, not the country that is providing the counterinsurgency force and advisors. Americans in the Philippines and Burma achieved both aims by empowering the indigenous forces to converse with and influence the population on a regular basis. Current U.S. and Coalition forces certainly have not maximized this capability to nearly the extent possible.

In analyzing the first element, security, the U.S. and Coalition forces are failing in this critical area. The focus in Iraq has been to kill or drive out insurgents in dangerous "Red Zone" areas around the country. Fallujah is the prime example of this typical conventional warfare approach in which the taking of the city fulfilled the immediate objective, but U.S. forces failed to fall back and secure the city to prevent insurgents from reoccupying it. This plays into the insurgents' hands as they can replenish their losses and still access the population at a later date. True attrition of insurgent forces occurs

[85] Anthony H. Cordesman, "The Iraq War and Lessons for Counterinsurgency," *Center for Strategic and International Studies Arleigh A. Burke Chair in Strategy,* (Working Draft, Revised: March 16, 2006), available from http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/060316_iraqctlessons.pdf; accessed on 30 March 2006.

when a security apparatus is in place after the clearance operations, and thus the insurgents are isolated from future access to the population.[86]

Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) must take the lead in security operations for a number of critical reasons. First, it is essential for the Iraqi population to see that the counterinsurgency effort is an Iraqi effort and not solely a U.S. and Coalition endeavor. This requires aggressive recruitment strategies in order to bolster the number of ISF personnel required to eventually conduct independent operations across Iraq. If the U.S. and Coalition forces continue to undertake the majority of these operations, Andrew Krepinevich points out that "This may enhance the insurgents' appeal to Iraqi nationalism, in that they can claim the Coalition is acting on its own behalf and not with the support of the Iraqi people."[87] Once the ISF have established a more dominant role, they will be in a better position than the Coalition forces to establish intelligence networks throughout the Iraqi population due to higher cultural awareness and inherent trust within their own society.

This strategy requires full cooperation, coordination, and integration between U.S. and Coalition conventional and unconventional forces to properly implement and execute a campaign plan that utilizes the capabilities of a variety of differentiated units. A counterinsurgency campaign in an environment the size of Iraq cannot be accomplished through SOF alone. An "Oil Spot" strategy requires moving beyond secure perimeters and actively engaging the population and the insurgents on a multitude of fronts. Advanced intelligence and weapon systems technology have their limits when arrayed against an unconventional opponent. The challenge of operating in this size of an environment may require conventional and unconventional forces (Coalition and ISF combined) to integrate into small teams: SOF personnel bringing in the expertise in this type of warfare and conventional forces reducing the manpower burden that such an operation would bring to bear. The true challenge lies with the operational commander's ability to accept an unconventional approach that may call for his conventional units

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[86] Andrew F. Krepinevich, "The War in Iraq: An Interim Assessment," *Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments: November 2005, 11*; available from the Naval Postgraduate School Dudley Knox Library; accessed on 31 March 2006.

[87] Krepinevich, *The War in Iraq*, 100.

falling under control of an unconventional structure that has been granted greater autonomy and authority, and is willing to take greater risks in the conduct of operations.

# V. CONCLUSION

## A. SUMMARY

The lessons that history can potentially provide elicit different opinions from various military and academic intellectuals. Some argue that the space of time impairs the ability to apply lessons of the past in current conflicts due to societal, industrial, and international contextual changes that have occurred between such periods of time. I favor the opinions of those who feel that there is still much to learn from past events. As John Arquilla states, "…there has been a tendency to neglect the treasure trove of older case studies of special operations, which may prove useful sources of insight and understanding."[88] War is not new, but an ancient art that every society has either encountered directly or felt the effects of indirectly. Though technological advances have changed many aspects of the conduct of modern war, the integration of differentiated units remains paramount to being able to develop a strategy that forces an opponent to sue for peace, or that relegates his cause as irrelevant.

Today's modern U.S. military is likely to continue to struggle to stabilize Afghanistan and Iraq against "inferior" enemies who lack the technological war-fighting resources that are so abundant within the U.S. arsenal. Though W.W. II is an era far removed from 2006, the experiences and relationships forged between conventional and unconventional units in the Philippines and Burma provide the valuable "insights and understanding" that Arquilla, among others, deems important. Detachment 101 and the LGAF's coordination with conventional components and use of indigenous forces created a unity of effort and force multiplier effect in two environments that were void of an overwhelming Allied presence, unlike those to be found in other theaters. The Philippines provides a study in which absence of alternatives guided commanders' utilization of unconventional forces, whereas Stilwell's lack of resources in Burma opened him up to recognizing the effectiveness that small units could provide his conventional forces through coordination with Donovan.

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[88] Arquilla, *From Troy to Entebbe: Special Operations in Ancient and Modern Times*, xv.

As increasing numbers of citizens and politicians alike begin to call for the reduction of U.S. forces in Iraq, an invisible stopwatch has began to count down, and the time to achieve "success" grows scarcer by the minute. Inherent in the creation of democratic governance in Afghanistan and Iraq is those countries' ability to develop their own independent security apparatus to defend against adversaries who oppose a democratic government solution. Iraq appears to face the greatest challenge as sectarian divisions continue to impede this. The solution has moved beyond a strictly "conventional" or "unconventional" strategy for uniting these religious and ethnic segments, and a fully integrated process must begin to take shape to produce the unity of effort amongst U.S., Coalition, and Iraqi forces if stability is to be achieved. Efficiency and effectiveness will continue to degrade unless the efforts of "finding, fixing, killing, and following up" against the insurgents becomes a *combined* effort.

## B. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Philippines and Burma case studies provide detailed descriptions of how conventional and unconventional units came together and fed off each others' capabilities. Most of the knowledge attained in order to competently merge these capabilities derived from either "war-time" experience or was proposed in advance by a charismatic leader like Donovan. There is a greater need to educate today's SOF and conventional commanders as to the capabilities that each can provide the other. Too often, each distinct force becomes pigeon-holed in its respective environment and fails to proactively engage with its counterparts to increase their respective knowledge of the other units' attributes. The case studies in this thesis identify many critical factors that led to success in the Philippines and Burma:

- Continuity at the operational commander level
- Long duration deployment of forces
- Intelligence fusion and support
- A clear division of labor
- The recognition of force multiplier effects
- The adverse consequences of misutilizing forces

Critical in comprehending the lessons learned through history is the ability to teach the leaders of today and tomorrow why they should want to coordinate. They must also, of course, understand the cultural, organizational, and operational aspects of their respective counter-disciplines of warfare.

I propose three solutions to enable an increased understanding and proper utilization of differentiated forces that may be instituted under either peacetime or wartime conditions. First, Professional Military Education (PME) for conventional officers must move beyond the Service Academies and War Colleges. Unconventional warfare courses are mostly absent from the curriculums offered by these institutions. The Naval Postgraduate School offers a curriculum in Irregular Warfare, through the Defense Analysis Department, that is increasingly opening enrollment billets for non-SOF officers. This program will not only educate conventionally minded officers about irregular warfare, but will simultaneously help foster relationships and indirect education through daily contact between non-SOF and SOF counterparts.

Second, mandatory disassociated tours for both conventional and unconventional officers must be implemented in a 20 year career. This will once again not only build relationships via cross-cultural interaction, but will enable the respective officers to better appreciate organizational dynamics. They will also be bringing in outside expertise and experience in an attempt to break down some of the inherent biases that exist within such organizations. Specifically for SOF, unconventional warfare expertise must be integrated more at the Geographic Combatant Commander level to serve as a through-put, or liaison, for the Theater Special Operations Commands.

Finally, U.S. military forces must continue to increase joint integrated exercise operations from the staff level all the way down to the individual operational units. These different elements should not be meeting for the first time in a combat zone, as many often do. It is vital that these units receive interoperability training *prior to* engagement in order to solidify the unity of effort required to properly execute their respective roles within a campaign strategy. Whenever this proves difficult to accomplish prior to deployment, every effort must be made for them to engage with one another upon immediate arrival in theater.

The recommendations I have proposed seem relatively simple when placed on paper; however, all too often in the past egoism, elitism, and the need for secrecy within units have created insurmountable barriers that have prevented the efficient and effective integration of forces. Though these barriers may never come down completely, they must at least be managed to a level where one can climb over. Technology and attritional warfare continue to be the focus of U.S. military ideology and the focus of transformational suggestions for the conduct of future warfare. However, enemies of the future are viewing the impact that the low-tech enemy of today is having on opinion, support, and morale of the U.S.; both domestically and internationally. Given the changes that occurred post-W.W. I and II in an attempt to minimize casualties and develop a more efficient manner of warfare, it will be interesting to see whether the U.S.'s experience in Afghanistan and Iraq will now push senior military decision makers to give more credence to aspects of irregular warfare. Will these leaders be more open to irregular solutions in an effort to provide better efficiency and effectiveness, or will attritional warfare maintain its dominance in military thinking as has been the case in every post-war era? If assurances of open-mindedness towards unorthodox approaches and solutions can not be made within military circles, then it is obligatory for the National Command Authority to institute its influence and authority over military decision makers to ensure that the lessons of the past and present are not forgotten or ignored.

## C. FUTURE RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

During my attendance at the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS), numerous presentations, course discussions, and outside class peer discussions, combined with my reading of first-person accounts, and interviews, made me aware of an apparent growing animosity within the SOCOM community between those with unconventional warfare (UW) backgrounds and those who favor direct action (DA). I think it would be an interesting thesis project to delve into the SOCOM organization and the different units that fall under SOCOM to examine the roles, cultures, and organizational constructs of the various Army, Navy, Air Force, Joint, and now Marine components of SOCOM.

Specifically, how well are we integrating as a community? Is there truly a division developing between UW and DA operators, or is a preponderance of effort heavily favored towards one; and what implications may this have for the future? Are specific commands like Army Special Forces and Naval Special Warfare experiencing degradation in their traditional UW and maritime special operations skills respectively; and are these SOCOM forces losing their niches as roles become more identical across certain units, or is it merely current operational requirements driving expanding operational capabilities? In any event, my short duration at NPS precluded me from examining these topics in greater detail; yet, further research in these areas would likely greatly benefit SOCOM and the special operations community.

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